1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

Yao make square houses.[1] Panelled doors and glass windows, deck-chairs and palm furniture are becoming more and more popular. The men wear long Moslem robes and the women are clothed in cotton. In the rural areas there are usually a few craftsmen who still ply their trades as carpenters and blacksmiths, though the latter no longer smelt, but use scrap-iron.

Labour Migration

Statistics are not available for the Yao of Portuguese East Africa or Tanganyika Territory. Yao constitute 34 per cent. of the total population of South Nyasa district, 15 per cent. of upper Shire, 11 per cent. of Blantyre and Zomba.[2] The proportion of labour migrants in these districts was in 1937 as follows:[3]

District	*Adult males fit to work*	*Percentage of emigrants*	*Number producing economic crops*	*Number of subsistence producers*	*Emigrants not heard of since 1930*
South Nyasa .	24,230	27·1	2,912 (12%)	12,025 (49%)	873
Upper Shire .	24,873	15·9	2,555 (10%)	16,629 (67%)	255
Blantyre . .	25,330	15·6	3,788 (15%)	10,163 (40%)	986
Zomba . .	26,879	12·6	7,720 (29%)	9,040 (33%)	553

South Nyasa district, which is unfertile waterless bush with a long history of famine and food shortage, has the highest proportion of labour migrants. Upper Shire, though not fertile, is more prosperous, benefiting from the tobacco- and cotton-growing industries, and from the dried-fish trade.[4]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE[5]

Kinship and Local Grouping

Among the Yao succession is matrilineal and marriage mainly matrilocal. According to some informants succession formerly passed down the line of brothers, as with the Bemba, but it now passes direct to the eldest sister's eldest son, or to descendants of other sisters in order of seniority.[6] Chiefly succession follows the same rule, but the most senior may be set aside for a more suitable candidate.[7]

Clan names, *fukuyo*, are inherited matrilineally, and formerly designated exogamous units,[8] but the marriage prohibition has now ceased to operate. Holders of the same clan name are unable to trace descent from a common ancestress, and for commoners clan names seem to have quite lost their significance; they are, however, carefully remembered in the chiefly lines and in other lines of hereditary rank, such as village headmen.

Within the general kinship grouping of the clan, a smaller group is recognized,

[1] Werner, 1906, p. 144; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 20–2, describes a round hut.

[2] 1931 Census information is taken because the district boundaries were changed between 1931 and 1945, so that the information in the 1945 Census would not be susceptible of comparison with that given in the 1937 Survey of Male Adult Population in the *Bell Report*, Appendix A.

[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A. [4] Smith, 1937.

[5] Information, unless otherwise stated, is from Mitchell, and relates to south Nyasaland Yao.

[6] Johnston, 1897, p. 470; Meredith Sanderson, 1900, p. 370. Cf. Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 185, who says that brothers inherit before sister's son.

[7] Ibid., p. 189. [8] Sanderson, q. 1922, p. 256.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

286 have said, to this day, and also appearing as the proper dress in all ceremonies. Clothing nowadays, among the majority, consists of calico of various kinds brought in by traders and further referred to under *Dress*.

287 Bark-cloth, *lisondo* (*chisondo*, Chin.) is made by the men. A piece of bark about two feet by one is cut from the living tree; the outside portions are removed and the whole piece, after being well scraped, is soaked in water. When partly softened, it is removed and hammered out with a wooden mallet; the process is repeated till the piece of bark is soft enough to enable it to be wrung in the hands, thus further loosening the fibres. The soaking, hammering, wringing, and pulling are continued till a piece of cloth three by five feet is obtained. This is sun-dried and yields a soft, pliable, and warm material. Several pieces may be sewed together to make a large sheet. Bark-cloth is sometimes stained black by soaking it in a kind of thick mud found on the plains. The mallet consists of a piece of hard wood with serrations on its face, held in a split stick handle; it is called *mbesero*. A log of wood with a flattened surface, called *mkongwe*, plays the part of the anvil, the man who is using the mallet usually sitting on one end of the log.

281 Skins. The Yao are unacquainted with the art of tanning. Skins are prepared only by drying, and then softened by hammering with stones. They are not employed as articles of clothing but the larger ones are used to sit upon, the skins of the leopard and the lion being reserved for chiefs. Others are used to make bags to carry flour, for powder pouches, and to cover guns. The blacksmith's bellows are made of goat's skin.

283 String, *lukonji* (*chinguo*, Chin.): Two kinds of string are made, one from flax, the other from the inner part of the bark of the baobab tree. Fishing nets are made from the former, game nets from the latter.

326 Metals and metal working. The only metal ever obtained from the ore by the Wayao was iron, and it is probable that they learned this from the Anguru and Anyanja. The industry is now nearly dead since the introduction of trade articles. A few blacksmiths still ply their trade, but their work is restricted to the manufacture of knives, spear-heads, and razors. Hoes are no longer made. The hoe blade supplied by traders is in the form of the old native-made article, which had in turn displaced the older hoeing-stick. The blacksmith deals with his mass of metal by hammering it with stones. He provides himself with bellows, a small iron hammer, and a rudimentary kind of tongs. He is called *wachipala*.

324 Stone. The only important uses for stones among the Yao are for supporting the cooking pots on the fire, for heating water in some medicinal preparations, and for grinding millet. For this last purpose, a large, flat stone, inclined at an angle, is set up in some convenient spot, often on the veranda, and the grain is ground by means of a smaller stone held in the hands.

412 [252] The flour pestle and mortar. Maize flour is prepared by pounding the grain in a big wooden mortar, by means of a wooden pestle, consisting of a pole some five feet long and four inches in diameter with round ends. The mortar consists of a tree trunk about

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Maravi FR4

Metallurgy.

Among the natives in Nyasaland, with the exception of copper in the north (Wabenga) and brass in parts near the Zambesi, iron was the only metal worked.

M Y 325

Other metals now used and obtained from traders are, copper, brass, lead, tin, etc. Iron = *chitsulo*; brass = *sapuli*; copper = *mkuo*; of iron, hoes, axes, knives, spears were made.

At the present time copper- and brass-bound spears are still found at the north end of the lake; copper bracelets and body rings also. The brass wire bracelets elsewhere are made from imported metal. Iron-stone ore in the old days was smelted in a furnace of stones made in the form of a long drain 3 feet long and 1 foot high; in this a mixture of lumps of ore and wood charcoal was put, and single bellows of goats' skins were used to make the draught, which is aided by building a chimney at one end; at the other end a hole is made in the ground to receive the molten metal. A quantity of this is then again melted in a hole in the ground with a charcoal fire about it, and then the metal run into a trench to form a thin bar which is then hammered and worked into a spear, etc. At the present time little smelting of ore is done. There are regular metalworkers, who make knives, etc., using a little hearth with goat-skin bellows, a crucible for copper and brass, etc., tongs, pliers, hammer.

M Y 326 M Y [501]

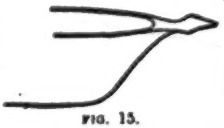

Fig. 15.

An iron plate with an aperture for drawing wire and files are also employed.

Bellows.—A goat's skin with a large opening sewn to two sticks; the bag is then held by these sticks and closed and pressed, the air being driven out through an iron tube inserted through one of the legs of the skin.

Boats.

M Y 501

The only form of boat in use is the dug-out canoe without outriggers. No skins are used. These are punted along by bamboo poles in the rivers. On the lake paddles are used, never oars. There are no sailing craft. The *mugona* is the tree used for making canoes, sometimes also the *mbawa*. They are cut out with a small adze, *sompo*. The *chso* bush is used for caulking, twenty or thirty of the stalks being rammed into the hole. *Mpisa*, a ground-creeper, is also used after being pounded. For baling anything is used. At Likoma a vessel like a very small canoe called *upo* is employed. A kind of raft made from pith-wood and called *magumbwa* is used to fish from. Occasionally these get washed out into the lake and the fisher has been drowned.

M 396 501

The canoes vary in size from 10 to 50 feet and more, the smaller being used as ferry-boats across a stream; the largest were made to carry slaves across the Lake Nyasa in the old days. In punting a canoe, one or two men work, keeping time. In paddling, any number may work, the largest canoes have twenty men working on either side. Down river near Zambesi the paddlers kneel; on the Lake they stand.

M Y 501